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[For additional information on linguistic change, see Category 178.]

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[For additional information on linguistic change, see Category 178.]

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INTRODUCTION

121 Sterling Brown insisted that "half truth is not enough, however picturesque." He urged fieldworkers to avoid taking white southern opinion as the arbiter of authenticity in black southern folklore. If, on the other hand, the accounts were genuine, if they went beyond a simplistic and misleading treatment of serious sociological issues, then as a result both blacks and whites could lay down the burden that stereotypes had put upon them. That, he believed, could ultimately bring about a revitalization of American culture."

Perhaps neither the consultants nor the national officials were completely happy with *Drums and Shadows*. Like many pioneering efforts, it picked its way cautiously through underbrush and thickets that obscured what lay ahead. The Savannah fieldworkers could see where they had come from more clearly than where they were going. Unlike Herskovits's 121 *Myth of the Negro Past*, which propounded theories of retention, reinterpretation, and syncretism, *Drums and Shadows* 128 eschews analysis. Seventy African parallels are cited and documented in the appendix, but the book ignores European parallels and the influence of culture contact. "Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns," Mary Granger acknowledges, "the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation." In his foreword Guy B. Johnson emphasizes that *Drums and Shadows* "wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis." Perhaps because of having eschewed such analysis, *Drums and Shadows* seems fresher nearly half a century later than the theoretical works of the period. Scholars now recognize that coastal (197) blacks of Georgia and South Carolina developed a creole lan- (126) guage that played a crucial role in shaping a creole culture. If the Savannah fieldworkers mistakenly considered their infor-

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mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking "correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accurately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to note generational and educational differences in speech and to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching ("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits."

LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of *Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

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178 (197) Perhaps most important, Gullah—the creole language developed by the slaves on the Sea Islands and in the South Carolina and Georgia low-country—continued to be the language in which their folk culture was passed down to posterity. Proverbs, metaphors of social experience, continued to reflect the African preference for speaking by indirection; and African naming patterns persisted on the Sea Islands. For generations, folktales of the audacious animal trickster Ber Rabbit and of the no less audacious slave trickster John blended elements of African folk narrative with elements of the Sea Islanders' historical experience. For generations talented Sea Island artisans created traditional arts and crafts such as coiled sweetgrass baskets and strip quilts. Out of this tradition one Sea Islander, Philip Simmons of Daniel Island, became Charleston's preeminent artist in wrought-iron gates. For generations folk medicine of both the pharmaceutical and the psychological varieties continued to heal the sick on the Sea Islands, and natural phenomena continued to serve as signs foretelling the future, whether changing weather or impending death. Ghosts or haunts—the spirits of the dead—returned from time to time to trouble the living, although local conjurers (assisted by various substances held to be magical) helped to ward off their unwelcome visits. For generations Sea Islanders entertained their children with play songs after the day's work was done. At night they sang the children to sleep with lullabies. On Saturday nights they held dances and frolics. Their folk version of Christianity retained the earliest "shouting" styles of singing spirituals, in which the African religious phenomenon of spirit possession remained vividly linked with prayer, music, and bodily movement. No one thought this way of life would change. The life of the land and the people seemed fixed in an invisible circle, enclosed by the waters and the passage of time.

177 And then something happened. It did not seem revolutionary at the time. In 1950 Georgia timber magnate General Joseph B. Fraser and his associates bought large tracts of land on the southern end of Hilton Head Island. At first they simply cut down the ancient stands of timber. But soon his son Charles, a young Yale law school graduate, launched the development of a series of lavish resort "plantations"—Sea Pines, Hilton Head, and Honey Horn—pioneering the "resort island" concept. In 1956 the first bridge to Hilton Head Island was constructed. Feverish land speculation ensued as other developers scurried onto Hilton Head and other Sea Islands to exploit the boom, buying up land from black islanders and building more resorts.

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And Christ step up and say,
"On this rock I build my church!" *Uh hum!*

And Peter say, "OOO! Hell no!!!" *(Much laughter, cheering, and clapping from the audience)*
"You bina make (laughing),
you bina—you bina make bread all the time on the other rock!!"
Tell em, "You gone make bread now cause I got a BIG rock!
You gone make bread with this rock!!!" *(Much clapping and urging from the listeners to tell another tale)*

That's it now—I got some more, but I'll tell y'all later!

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Three Gullah Tales with African Parallels

Hear tell say Ber Rabbit ben come here from Africa.

The Gullah tales with African parallels that are included here are only a minute sampling of tales on the Sea Islands having roots in African literary traditions. The student of comparative literature can discover topics for extensive comparisons from the collections of Joel Chandler Harris, Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Finnegan, Florence Cronise and Henry Ward, and Richard Dorson, among others.[28] These topics manifest themselves through themes, plots, characterizations, and other conventions, all worthy of detailed exploration in themselves but by far exceeding the limitations of this book.

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I took certain precautionary measures in collecting the African tales to try to eliminate the possibility of receiving tales that might have origins other than African.[29] I made no requests, however, for particular types or kinds of tales: the stories recorded on each continent were collected at random on any subject that the informants chose.

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The African tales in this book came from Uzoaba, an Igbo village near Owerri, Nigeria.[30] The Igbo culture was selected for study and comparison with Gullah because the linguistic features seemingly most prominent on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina (the island on which I have conducted most of my research), are traceable to the Igbo lan-

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guage. For example, the pronominal system in contemporary Gullah still reveals such features as the singular and plural second-person pronouns *unu* and *hunu*, respectively. These features correspond to the pronoun *una*, the second-person plural marker in contemporary Igbo. Likewise, one pronoun still expresses the range of third-person pronoun possibilities in Gullah for many speakers. Although Igbo does employ two pronouns—/o/, the vowel sound in *doe*, and /ọ/, the sound of *aw* as in *law*—the two systems are similar in that the same pronoun may be used to refer to both male and female. While it is true that many West African languages do follow this undifferentiating practice, other linguistic features link the lexicon of Gullah and Igbo, including [də], the locative, and the form of the verb *to be*. (This subject is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

In addition to linguistic features, there are similarities between the two cultures in hair-wrapping techniques, food preparation, child-rearing practices, and other social customs already discussed, enough similarities to suggest a concentration of Igbo ancestral background for residents of Wadmalaw and perhaps other islands as well. It is well known among the islanders that each island carries its unique pattern of language and culture, and these patterns may perhaps indicate carryovers from elsewhere in West Africa.

As Cronise and Ward have observed, some African tales have parallels in cultures in which there is only the remotest possibility of mutual influence. The tale of the "Tar Baby," for example, is found in various versions in most folklore. Certain themes may indeed be universal, just as some linguistic features are universal. The similarities between the Igbo and Sea Island tales cannot be dismissed as coincidental, however, because the genetic link between the African and the African-American people provides the basis for cultural and literary continuity.[31]

The evidence of literary continuity is most apparent in the handling of traditional themes and characters. Both cultures delight in imbuing physically insignificant and seemingly helpless creatures with extraordinary mental acumen. Their superior intelligence and discretion make these small beings not only godlike in powers but models for much stronger creatures to emulate. The "helpless" animal may take the form of the spider of the Gold Coast, the turtle of the Slave Coast, the rabbit of the Sierra Leone region, or the *hlakanyana* of South Africa.

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The Language

The old-time talk we still de talkem here!

We still speak Gullah here!

History

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The factors which nurtured the Sea Island culture also nurtured the development and perpetuation of the unusual Sea Island language called Gullah or Geechee. The geographical isolation, the marginal contact with speakers outside the Sea Island communities, and the social and economic independence contributed to creating an environment where a mixed language could thrive. Gullah is defined as a creole, the language that results when a pidgin, which has no native speakers but comes into existence as the product of communication among speakers of different linguistic backgrounds, takes over as the only language of the community.

197 The Sea Island language, like the culture, is undergoing transfor-
178 mations. Several varieties of contemporary Gullah can be heard in day-to-day conversation on topics ranging from who is running for president to the best bogging place in the creek. With the exception of the unusual accent, some speakers show little deviation from standard English at all. The degree of standard English acquisition is a reflection of such factors as the level of education, the accessibility or inaccessibility of a given island to outside forces, and the extent of inside social mobility. Just as one hears a form of standard English, one also hears the "real Gullah" spoken by children and adults in all aspects of community life.

197 The history of Gullah is complicated. It is called a creole language

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because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private people and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

> Francis: Why they speak the way they does?
> Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
> Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
> Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
> Francis: I know it's different.
> Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

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know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

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Present-Day Gullah

• 197 Since the early 1920s Gullah has been known to vary regionally; recent studies by Irma Cunningham, Patricia Nichols, Charles Joyner, Salikoko Mufwene, Ian Hancock, and me, conducted in different areas of the Sea Islands and the adjacent coast indicate that there are still distinct varieties.[8] Minor details such as consistent use of the pronoun *e*, which is applied to both sexes, and a distinctive fricative "fizzing" sound on words beginning with *w* would go unnoticed by casual observers. However, they permit the islanders to detect when one is from a different island, when one is a total outsider, and when one is trying to talk "proper," in the negative sense of the word. In fact, during my first few years on the islands, I learned that I should not try to pass myself off as an islander by an attempt to imitate the Sea Island language. While I may have had the syntax right, I was never able to perfect the accent, and it is the stress and intonation that give one away. When I asked the islanders how they were able to detect such small differences, I was often told, "I ain't know how I de know, but I de know." And they did know.

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197 The outside pressures now exerted on the Gullah-speaking communities in the coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina have created the general conditions that David DeCamp describes for post-creole speech communities (i.e., communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with a standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and new educational programs and other infusions from the outside have broken down the formerly rigid social structure enough to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of Gullah speakers to modify their speech in the direction of standard English.[9] Given this sociolinguistic situation, the Sea Islands offer an ideal opportunity to investigate linguistic convergence and change.

197 Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify several facts about Gullah in order to distinguish it from the speech of other black Americans. First, whereas Gullah is a creole, inland black speech is defined as a dialect of English, that is, as a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. A dialect of any given language is similar to that language in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax; such differences as may exist often result from regional or social variations, and most dialectal variations present few

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major comprehension barriers to speakers of the standard language. On the other hand, while a creole language also results from social and regional variations, a creole is similar to the primary language mainly in vocabulary; it differs in features of syntax and phonology to the extent that the creole and the primary language may be mutually unintelligible.

Secondly, despite the common West African ancestry of speakers of black English dialect, Gullah, and other creoles, isolation has tended to protect the Africanisms in the islanders' speech. As noted in Chapter 1, blacks are still in a majority on most of the Sea Islands and still enjoy the effects of both isolation and majority status. The impact of outside forces is not yet intense enough in most places to modify greatly the traditional, socially cohesive customs. And Gullah still thrives as the language of familiarity in the Sea Island communities. Even the few white families that have long made their homes on the islands speak Gullah, and readily admit to speaking it. Most native-born white islanders say they learned Gullah as a first language from their parents, neighbors, and island playmates.

The third and perhaps most important distinction between Gullah and black dialect is in vocabulary. True, the lexicon of Gullah, like that of black dialect, is composed primarily of English words. Even so, there are a host of African-derived words in Gullah, some of which are generally unknown to inland black speakers, for example:

gula, "pig": Kongo
goober, "peanut": Kimbundu
gumbo, "okra": Tshiluba
gumbi, "medicinal weed": Bambara
heh, "yes": Vai
hoodoo, "bad luck": Hausa
yambi, "yam": Vai
chigger, "small flea": Wolof
juk, juky, "disorderly": Wolof
cush, "bread," "cake": Hausa
nana, "elderly woman," "grandmother": Twi
nansi, "spider": Twi
tote, "to carry": Kikongo
chicabod, "seesaw": Mandingo
unu, "you": Igbo
yent, "to lie": Umbundu
pinto, bento, "coffin": Temne
biddy, "small chicken": Kongo
buckra, "white man": Ibebio
de, "to be": Igbo
eh, "yes": Igbo
ashantie, "house": Ga[10]

Most of the islanders still have two kinds of given names: one used within the Sea Island community and one used in outside transactions. Mozi, Misy, Maima, Kutsey, Kisi, Lunza, Masa, Yatta, and Chineque

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There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old traditions.

Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the patterns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many, though they are endangered by development and pollution of the waters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some continue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit, tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pictures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television because the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants, ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an audience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the older generations are not being passed on to the children because the islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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tions, and a good education does not include the old vocabulary. The children do, however, still learn to speak and understand Gullah: they return home from school and community to extended families where older members are responsible for their discipline and training; the church services are rendered in an elite variety of Gullah; the schoolteachers are from the islands and often chastise the children in Gullah; and most of all, the islanders are in a majority and Gullah, not standard English or a variety thereof, is the accepted language of the community. In the near future, therefore, some version of Gullah will probably continue to exist as the language of the home and of the community.

Finally, the islanders remain as conservative about their culture as they ever were. As I have noted, they are hostile to strangers, and word of outsiders carries quickly. No one, black, white, or otherwise, can escape their cultural interrogations. They will want to know who each newcomer is, and why this person has arrived. But it is not true, I learned, that the islanders will remain hostile. Once one establishes oneself within a community (which often takes years to do), one will receive all possible warmth and hospitality and all the help one might need to carry out one's work.

In writing this book I promised to tell the story of the islanders as I saw it, and to the best of my ability, that is what I have done.

The end of that one!

[p. 150 is blank]

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Appendix 2

Buh Rabbit en' de Lawd

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What follows is the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" from Chapter 3, reconstructed in the Gullah of a century ago. A comparison of the two versions will show how the language has changed in the interim.

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I am grateful to Mrs. Virginia Mixon Geraty, who suggested and prepared the transcription, for her time, willingness, and patience.

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One time Buh Rabbit gone tuh de Lawd fuh git mo' ecknowledge, mo' wisdum. En' de Lawd tell Buh Rabbit, "Awright! Uh wan' you fuh fetch me ennyt'ing wuh w'ite. Ennyt'ing w'ite."

Rabbit gone een de fiel', en' 'e gone en' meet Buh Paa'tridge dey dey, 'e hab uh bag, en' 'e tell Buh Paa'tridge: "Uh betchuh all ub you, all ub you ent able fuh full'up dishyuh bag."

Paa'tridge say, "How you mean?"

Run een de bag en' see kin you full'um up."

De paa'tridge 'pread 'e wing, run een de bag en' full'um up. Buh Rabbit pit'um 'cross 'e shoulduh en' cya'um tuh de Lawd. "Awright!" 'E gone sen'um back. Buh Rabbit sen' Buh Paa'tridge back.

"Well, now, Buh Rabbit. Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—uh rattlesnake!" Dainjus!!! 'E pit Buh Rabbit weh 'e dainjus, fuh true!

Buh Rabbit tell'um, "Awright!"

Buh Rabbit gone een de fiel' en' fin' uh rattlesnake, en' 'e hab uh cane en' 'e tell Buh Rattlesnake: "Buh Snake, oonuh ent—oonuh ent long ez dis cane." Buh Rattlesnake run 'long 'side de cane.

Buh Rabbit say, "No! Uh yent mean fuh do'um so. Uh wan' oonuh fuh run een'um."

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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

Chapter 4

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1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.' " When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: " 'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk' " (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

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3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

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4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

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7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification retained by BaKongo peoples.

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter 1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote extensively about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas, and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah" Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech. "The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.'" Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" trying to understand it. Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.'"[4]

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6] Turner includes in his list of African words *gala (gola, gula)* which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola (. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

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174 main, but other elements of religion and ritual were not. Sacred medicine in the form of conjuration and healing is one example. According to Thompson "Nowhere is Kongo-Angola influence on the New World more pronounced, more profound than in black traditional cemeteries in the South. The nature of the objects that decorate the graves there . . . reveals a strong continuity . . . a restatement of the Kongo notion of the tomb as a charm for the persistence of the spirit. . . ." Thompson notes the strong sense of communion with ancestors among Kongo peoples and manifestations of this retentive element in the New World. Additionally, the BaKongo concepts of "bad magic" play a significant role in New World attitudes toward the supernatural.[14] All of these elements were part of Kongo sacred traditions. Thus, a complex pattern of convergence of at least two African cultural regions developed in coastal Carolina, creating a socioreligious community among the Gullahs.

175 567 Sea Island Gullahs received little attention in antebellum days. On the contrary, while as laborers they produced some of the world's finest cotton, Sea Island slavery was a very impersonal type of bondage. Most slaveholders did not directly oversee their plantations, nor live on the "unhealthy" Islands for more than a season. But the advent of civil conflict brought some immediate changes. Early in the war the Sea Island region was occupied by Northern forces, and widespread interest centered on these slaves whom the "aristocracy" left behind in their hasty flight. It was in the Sea Islands that the so-called "Port Royal experiment," supposedly a test of black initiative and valor, was tried.[15]

[197] Northern reaction to the Gullahs was mixed. Not all of the "missionaries" who embarked on the Sea Island enterprise were convinced that efforts at "uplifting" Gullahs would succeed. "It is the opinion of all who know the South," wrote Arthur Sumner of Cambridge, Mass., from St. Helena Island, "that the negroes of these Sea Islands are the most degraded slaves South of Dixie's Line . . . a meaner, more ungrateful and unhandsome lot than those of our district I pray that I shall never see."[16]

Undoubtedly Northerners such as Sumner were completely unprepared to find such "foreign" and "pure" blacks, who had an initial suspicion about the motives of white people no matter what their political affiliation. Yet other Northerners felt differently about the Gullahs and [197] grew to truly appreciate them. Their distinct form of speech was more than a separate dialect which linguists and folklorists later attempted to

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary:

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena:

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the

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it is a great while before you can get them to understand what ye meaning of words is & yt without such knowledge instruction's would prove vain & ye ends pr[o]posed abortive, for how can a proposition be believed, without first being understood? & how can it be understood if ye person whom it is offered has no idea even of ye sound of those words which expresses ye proposition?[38]

Ottolenghe, himself a slaveholder, cited as an example a young couple he had purchased four years previously. According to the missionary, he had instructed the pair diligently and forbade their association with any slaves except those at his "Negro school." Despite his "pains in their education," they were in his words, "in point of learning very slow and difficient." He could never send them on an errand successfully unless his wishes were put in writing.[39]

The creation of a medium of communication within the black community undoubtedly engaged older as well as newer inhabitants. As a result, elements of several ethnic language families seem evident. Additionally, similarities of Gullah to Jamaican dialect and the dialect spoken by Bush African-Americans in Suriname imply a certain commonality in black pidgin languages formed by isolated societies from similar African roots. No one can say for sure when Gullah began to crystallize into a common method of communication among the majority of slaves. Nor can it be denied that influence from non-African sources helped create Gullah. Yet formulation of the dialect itself was a unique communical experience. Shaping a language reinforced social cohesion and community. With the large influx of Africans coming in during the middle period of the slave trade, quite possibly the dialect took permanent root during that time, drawing, of course from groups of blacks already in the region and already adapting to white culture. The following is an example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect, taken down in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and perhaps one of the earliest efforts to formulate the pidgin into a literal, written form of communication:

BUDDY QUOW

Was matter Buddy Quow?
I ble Obesha bang you,
You tan no sabby how,
Dah Backrow Man go wrong you,
Buddy Quow,
Dah Backrow &

A Key to Buddy Quow

What is the matter Brother Quow?
I believe the overseer has beaten you,
You look I don't know how,
That White Man has wronged you,
Brother Quow,
That White Man &

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17 ilar to that of the enthusiastic evangelist.[36] Hence it was primarily a small acculturated group of blacks who took in the Great Awakening, while the countryside swelled with new Africans. Within this sociocultural tug-of-war, Africans and American slaves formed their communal outlook and clung to those features of life which provided a sense of identity, personhood, and autonomy.

Old Ways Die Slowly

The steady stream of Africans pouring into the Carolina Lowcountry, and the lack of a meaningful imparting of the Christian religion could not help but reinforce an African cultural and spiritual presence. In the country and island parishes especially, whites lived among a foreign-born servile labor force. Ministers were not only exasperated by the resistance of planters to having their slaves converted, but even more frustrated by the problem of communicating with Africans. First was the challenge of language. "Those brought up among us," wrote one early Society missionary, "are both civilized and speak good English . . . whereas those that are brought hither from their own country, except a few that come very young, seldom or never speak good English."[37]

17 •197 African slaves lived, worked, and socialized among each other. Their lack of exposure to English and concentration on developing a mode of communication among themselves undoubtedly slowed the process of learning a totally foreign tongue. Gullah language was being created during the colonial decades and the lengthy period of African slave trading. This was also happening elsewhere, such as in the Savannah region, where Africans imported mainly through Charleston were laboring in the country and island reaches of Georgia. As long as Africans remained isolated and their numbers greatly reinforced, language was a problem. Bray Associate missionary Joseph Ottolenghe (an Italian Jew converted to Christianity), provides some insight into the problems and difficulties encountered in the seacoast region. In a letter to the Associates, he reminded them of the impediments faced by "primitive Christians" in olden times, but added that they faced no "Hindrancies. & great Diffioulties" which compared to the instruction of African slaves:

> The formers understood ye language of ye instructos, & if not persons were appointed skill'd in ye language of ye novices, whereas our Negroes are so ignorant of ye English Language, and none can be found to talk in their own, yt

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2

No hawte bun morrowgo,
Nusso grandy hungry do you,
I hab some Barbaracco,
I bring dem all for you morrowgo

I bring dem all &

Don't let your heart be troubled Country Man,
Nor great hunger distress you,
I have some Barbaracco's*
I will bring them all for you Country Man.

I will bring &

*Horse Beans

3

No hungry nor so dry
For true now no me yerry
Make vawter for me yie
I cry so, tell me vary vipe me yie

I cry so tell &

I am not hungry nor dry,
Indeed now only hear me,
It makes my eyes water,
I have cried so, until I am tired wiping my eyes.

I have cried so &

• • •

5

Dah time Quasheba tell,
De Pickney he bin coming
I gow go for to sell

De hog me mommo gibe me, berry well

Dah hog &

When Quasheba said,
She was with child,
I went immediately and sold very well,
The hog my mother gave me.

The hog &

6

Von coat I buy um new,
Von ropper I bin bring come
Von new hankisha too
I nebo bin go tink um nusso true.

I nebo bin &

I bought a new coat,
A wrapper I bought also,
And a new handkerchief too,
I thought of nothing but that it was true.

I thought &

7

When Unco Quaco say,
De Pickney he was come now,
I no go morrow stay
My harete bin knock pum pum on true grangie

My harete &

When Uncle Quaco said,
The child was just born,
I did not stay till the morrow,
My heart beat pum, pum for great joy.

My heart &

8

Gor Mighty da nah Buf
See how Quasheba do me
Dah Backrow Man he luf
He bring molatto for me Gor nah Buf

He bring &

God Almighty above!
See how Quasheba has used me!
She loved the White Man,
And has brought a Mulatto for me,
God above!

And has brought &

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9

He yie, he nose, he mout,	Its eyes, its nose, its mouth,
(I bin good mine for hit um)	(I had a great inclination to strike it.)
Tun ebery mossel bout	Take every part of it together,
Lak Obesha bin pit um out he mout.	'Tis as if the overseer had spit it out of his mouth.
Lak Obesha &	'Tis as if &

The poem,"Buddy Quow," is a fascinating example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect and demonstrates the contribution of various ethnic groups in the formation of pidgin. The names Quow, Quasheba, and Quaco are derived from the Tshi language (Ashanti and Fanti), Africans of the Gold Coast region. Gold Coast Africans, as noted previously, were the first black Carolinians. They were not imported in as large numbers as other groups, but were preferred by South Carolinians, and represent a continuous contribution throughout much of the slave-trade era. Hence their early presence and reinforcement made a strong base. The word "pickney" is derived from the Portuguese and Spanish "pequeno nino" (small child), and barbaracco means horse bean in both languages. This may be a Kongo-Angolan influence since Portuguese ports were in Kongo-Angola and many Africans from that region were imported to South Carolina. The masculine pronoun used to refer to both genders may indicate Upper Guinea influence, where such usage was common among Africans learning English on their native coasts from Methodist missionaries or traders, as previously discussed. Since Gullah is a spoken rather than written dialect, the interpreter of the poem may have lost some of the meaning. Yet most of the interpretations correspond to what is known of Gullah dialect and offer a sense of what Gullah was like when it was a true dialect. Writers who believe that there is no sharp break between Gullah and general black vernacular may not fully consider the historical Gullahs and their creative means of communication in an isolated setting. While there are obvious similarities between twentieth-century black vernacular and Gullah as recorded in the twentieth century, the geographical isolation in which Gullah was originally created points to a dialect peculiar to the Sea Island region, where Africans made their own language adjustments with minimal acculturative influences.[40] In any case, the adoption of a means of communication common to all the slaves in the area was a significant community-building mechanism, and previous African language orientations played an important role.

In addition to a language barrier, ministers realized that the black pop- 175

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oped through African cultural convergence. Their pattern of speech was one example of this. "Their language," wrote one missionary in 1840, "though . . . understood by themselves, cannot be by one unaccustomed to them, without great study and application." It was a peculiar creation—an English patois. As previously discussed, Lorenzo Dow Turner's linguistic study of Gullah, conducted over a fifteen-year period, involved many former slave informants. He views Gullah as a creolized form of English with elements of survivals from African languages spoken by ethnic groups brought to South Carolina and Georgia. Turner found most retentions present in vocabulary but also in elements of sound, syntax, morphology, intonation, and word formation. Yet as previously mentioned, Gullah was even more than a distinct pidgin English or dialect, but a means of expressing oneself in the most graphic and sometimes literal sense. Arthur Sumner, a Northern teacher on the Sea Islands during the Civil War, found it "easier to understand a foreign language":

> 'Talk we get dinner,' means 'do you mean that I shall get dinner?'
>
> Byron came to me this morning with a message from his mother.—'Ma says, if you give her some trade. . . .' Can you make it out? Oh, dull girl! The meaning is clear. Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread.[48]

William F. Allen, another Northern teacher, also wrote about the Gullah's peculiar interpretations and usage of English. For instance, "stand," referred to the state or condition of a person, place or thing. On one occasion, Allen, teaching sentence structure to a class of children, had them go over to the window and then asked them the color of the sky. "Nobody could tell," and most of them "stared straight ahead at Jimmy, who was in the yard, and I half expected them to say 'black.' " Finally "Abraham" ventured "white," then "red." Dick, a former house man, passed by the window and Allen expressed his frustration, to which Dick replied promply, " 'lick'em":

> "Well Dick," said I, here's a chance for you to lick Tom, who was appearing around a corner of the barn. "Tom, what's the color of the sky?" Tom stared at the sky, but said nothing. Dick grinned. "Tom, how sky *stan*'?" "Blue" shouted Tom.[49]

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Missionaries categorized black spirituality as "curious superstitions" or as types of worship reminiscent of Catholicism. Gullahs had their own religious leaders who sometimes professed Christianity and solicited

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), 46–59.
567 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.
113 29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.
30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.
31. Ibid., xvii.
113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

Prologue

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaûm, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to
567 the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

199 4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
113 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).
113 6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Linguistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114, Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1968; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes, 15–16; SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 176–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

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36. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 164–65, 195; "Early Negro Churches," 77–78, 83–86; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 177, 182–84; William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785).

37. Thomas Hassell to SPG, December 2, 1731 and March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series A, vol. 4 (2); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4 (2); Peter H. Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee at Last," *Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Religion Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (November, 1979): 2–5.

38. Quoted from James B. Lawrence, "Religious Education of the Negro in the Colony of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 14 (March, 1930): 46–47.

39. Ibid.

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40. Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–85, 87–88. For a discussion which denies, incorrectly I think, that there is a distinction between Gullah and "generalized Black English vernacular," see J. L. Dillard, *Lexicon of Black English* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 103–4. An interesting discussion of Gullah as a Creole language is found in Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), Chapter 7: see also Wood, *Black Majority*, 172–90. For a discussion of cultural unity joining Gullahs with blacks of the Caribbean, see Velma Pollard, "Cultural Connections in Paule Marshall's *Praise Song for the Widow*," *World Literature Written in English* 25, no. 2 (1985): 285–98. For a fascinating, informative debate over the formulation of Creole and the impact of Upper Guinea versus Gold Coast and Angolan influences see Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," 3–16, and Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 17–35.

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41. See Chapter 2. Also see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1971). Thomas discusses systems of beliefs current in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, and retention of some beliefs after that time. As Thomas states, almost every "primitive" religion was for the adherents a means of gaining supernatural power. Yet this does not preclude religion as a means of explanation, decreeing of moral imperatives, or representation of social order.

42. Benjamin Pownall to SPG, October 24, 1723, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4(2); Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; J. Ottolenghe to SPG, July 12, 1758, November 18, 1754, SPG London Mss of Dr. Bray's Associates.

43. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, and, Francis Le Jau to SPG, October 20, 1709, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5.

44. Ibid.; Thomas Hassell to SPG, March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

45. Whitefield, *Journals*, 382–83, Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 246–47.

46. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 14; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1).

47. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 56, 57, 63, 72, 90, passim; Hutson, "Register of Stoney Creek Church," 22–26; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," passim.

48. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 70–91.

49. Ibid., 63; *Journal of the Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505.

50. Whitefield, *Journals*, 419, 422, 444, 446; Seward, *Journal*, 6–7; Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Eddings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6; ield to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Missions* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who argues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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128 THIS BOOK IS BASED on tape-recorded material. In putting it together we tried to use the strongest photograph to illustrate each text; the person in an accompanying photograph is not necessarily the person speaking. Please see the list of photograph credits at the back of the book for specific information.

(197) We have deliberately refrained from caricaturing the pronunciation of Gullah dialect by distorted spellings. There are a number of scholarly (113) studies of Gullah now available in addition to Lorenzo Turner's classic 1949 book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

533 The songs are sung without instrumental ac-
128 companiment. In most of the religious songs, complex hand and foot rhythms are added as the spirit mounts. This particular style is called "shouting." Songs are usually sung with an informal leader in a call and response pattern. The transcriptions are inevitable simplifications of what is sung, for to capture the subtle shadings and minute variations of pitch and rhythm would result in an almost unreadable score. Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another.

533 We strongly urge the reader to listen to these
216 songs on two Folkways records of Johns Island music that are available: *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts and Children's Games* and *Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax: Sea Island Folk Festival*. A new compilation of the best of these recordings is available on Folkways album 40031, *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts, Folktales and Children's Songs*. An interesting comparison of the particular style in the Johns Island area with that of coastal singers further south can be made by listening to the albums of songs from the Georgia sea islands and from nearby McIntosh County.

(p. xvi-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Mrs. Idell Smalls

I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 177 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in 159 186 178 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

191 197 536 888 The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Purpose of Dissertation

121 In recent years linguists have recognized that historical change can be observed in children's acquisition of a first language, in the sign language of the deaf, and in newly developing languages like pidgins and creoles. The immediate aim of the present study is to provide evidence from a rapidly changing creole that language change can be observed in the present, across age and social groups, within a cohesive speech community. As a contribution to an emerging theory of linguistic variation, it will provide evidence that linguistic variation is systematic both for individuals and for the speech community, is inherent to language change, and can be activated by social factors which may be different for each community.

This study is also seen as a contribution to the growing documentation of the history of Black Americans in the United States. Gullah, as the language spoken by the 121 •197 vast majority of those slaves imported to the coastal rice plantations of colonial South Carolina, is in some senses a more native American language than those dialects of English

12/1/91

spoken by early settlers from the British Isles. Gullah in its earliest stages developed from the needs of speakers of many West African languages for a language of mutual intelligibility. The subsequent changes in this creole have come about as the functions for which the language was used increased and as its speakers began to interact on a more socially equal level with speakers of standard English. Because of the historical patterns of migration by blacks from the coastal plantations to fields in the Mississippi delta and then to urban ghettos of the north, Gullah probably serves as the source for those dialects of English which are unique to Black Americans. As such, Gullah and the changes it has undergone serve as an important base for discussions of the language varieties used by much of the black population in the United States.

1.1 Change and the Post-creole Continuum

For purposes of the discussion which follows, certain central terms will be defined. Pidgin is used here in the sense of a language variety which develops in a contact situation between speakers of different native languages. As such, a pidgin is no one's first language, it is relatively unstable, and it is used for a limited range of communicative functions. As the pidgin becomes used for a wider range of functions and as its structure becomes more stabilized, it sometimes acquires native speakers who use it as a first language. At this stage, the language variety

12
•197 is said to be a creole. Some creoles exist in contact with the official standard variety of the language with which they correspond. When social conditions are favorable, such a creole merges with the standard. During the period of merger, a post-creole continuum exists which ranges from speech showing highly creolized structures, similar to those of the pidgin stage and very different from those of the standard, to speech which is nearly that of the official standard in grammatical structure. The post-creole stage of Gullah is the subject of the present study.

In his discussion of the general phenomenon of a post-creole speech continuum, DeCamp (1971) proposes that two conditions are necessary for the development of the post-creole stage of a creole:

1) a correspondence between the official communicative standard and the creole

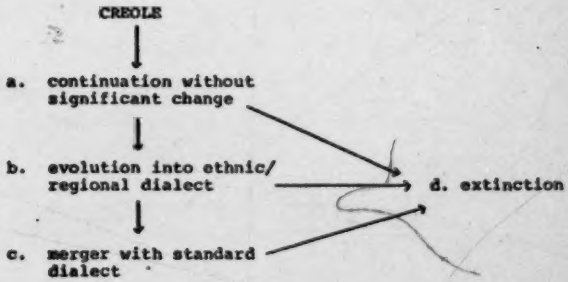
2) a recent breakdown of formerly rigid social stratification, with differing degrees of acculturation for sub-groups.

Communities in which Gullah is spoken now meet these two conditions. The official standard for the region is English, although the spoken variety of this standard is a low-prestige dialect of the standard. The social conditions are also met. Formerly rigid social and economic segregation along racial lines has broken down to a significant extent in schools, businesses, and politics within the region. Economic conditions for many members of Gullah-speaking communities have changed for the better over the

121
197 past four decades. Geographic mobility and opportunities for participation in portions of mainstream culture have increased both the motivation and the chances to use the standard variety of English.

DeCamp describes four alternative final stages for the creole life-cycle as follows: continuation without change, extinction, evolution into a 'normal language,' and merger with the corresponding standard. I would like to propose a slightly different schema, in which four alternatives are seen as potential stages in the life of a creole, which can be stopped at any point by relevant social and geographic factors. Two of the four alternatives are different from those of DeCamp in important ways. Instead of 'continuation without change,' I suggest that 'continuation without significant change' is more accurate, since no language used by living speakers exists without exhibiting some change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language,' I suggest rather 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' is a preferred characterization, since creoles are 'normal' languages in every structural sense although they may have a more limited range of functions than an official standard. At this stage the language variety is often associated with a particular social group or geographic region and is viewed as a low-prestige dialect of the standard language. The standard dialect with which it can merge at the final stage of its life-cycle is that dialect which has been standardized,

121 often through writing, and is the high-prestige dialect of
•197 the standard language. The following diagram shows these possible stages in the post-creole life cycle:



According to such a schema, a creole would go through stages (a) and (b) before reaching (c), but could go directly to (d) at any point in its history, given the relevant social circumstances. The stage of 'extinction' can mean both that the creole has no more living speakers as well as that attitudes toward the language variety are such that it is no longer considered a separate entity, distinct in some degree from all other languages. In his discussion of creoles, DeCamp considers Gullah to be an extinct creole. As the analysis of linguistic variables in Chapter 4 will show, for certain grammatical categories some speakers have systematic

121 differences from other varieties of English which would
• 197 indicate the continuing life of the creole. DeCamp's theory of a language continuum at the post-creole stage makes it possible to understand stages (a) through (c) as co-existing synchronically for a given speech community, thereby mitigating the problem of determining precisely the stage which characterizes a particular community at a given point in time. In the speech community studied here, individuals can be found whose speech reflects all three stages. Certain speakers are moving faster than others toward merger with the standard, and selected social factors appear to influence their rate of change. The continuum theory legitimizes the variation which has become increasingly evident in all modern studies of the language used in such communities.

The notion of a linguistic continuum allows us to better understand why different linguists might look at the same speech community and describe the language variety used variously as a 'creole' or as a 'dialect.' At the stage in which a post-creole community is moving toward a non-standard dialect of the standard language, valid comparisons can be made both with the creole grammar and with the standard grammar--forward and backward, as it were. Thus Labov (1969) has described verb forms used in an urban language variety spoken mainly by speakers of West African descent in terms of a dialect of the standard, whose differences from standard English are the result of relatively low-level

121 phonological rules. Stewart (1969), on the other hand, has
•197 maintained that the same surface differences result from underlying structural differences, having their origin in a creole variety of English which preceded the nonstandard dialect used by many blacks. Placing the language variety under discussion within a broader continuum, it becomes easier to see how both Stewart and Labov could find equally valid correspondences on either end of this continuum.

creole	nonstandard dialects	standard
GULLAH	BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR	NETWORK ENGLISH
		[WHITE SOUTHERN ENGLISH]

Figure 1. Language Varieties in the Gullah Post-Creole Continuum

121 The place of the White Southern English dialect in this continuum is problematic and outside the scope of the present discussion, but its place as part of such a continuum should be noted (see Wolfram 1974 for a discussion of the relationship of white Southern speech to Vernacular Black English in rural Mississippi).

The view which such a continuum permits of the

12 of which the individual is a part. This model is sometimes labeled the 'Quantitative Paradigm.' The model developed by DeCamp (1971, 1973), Bailey (1973), and Bickerton (1975), in contrast, has allowed variability in the communal grammar and has permitted an analysis of the speech community in terms of individuals having different grammars, who nevertheless communicate with each other. The grammar of the individual speaker in this model, variously called the Wave Model or Dynamic Analysis, has been viewed in categorical terms. Bickerton, in particular, views grammatical rules in terms of categorical shifts from one rule to another, with possible variation only in the transition stage between an old and a new rule. DeCamp (1973) has come closest to combining the process-oriented features of both models in his suggestion that an implicational model of the type proposed in DeCamp (1971) and utilized as the basis for the Dynamic Paradigm proposed by Bickerton (1975) might incorporate certain features of the frequency analysis used by Labov and Sankoff.

12 In the study of linguistic change in Gullah, both
• 197 models have been useful in analysis of the data. Implicational scales which include information on relations of 'more or less,' rather than merely 'presence or absence,' have revealed relationships not readily apparent from frequency counts alone in some cases. Frequency data on the use of creole features by speakers carefully matched for

12
•197 age, sex, and social group reveals relationships between language use and social factors which are difficult to perceive from an implicational ranking of linguistic features alone. Both models have been found inadequate in that neither allows for both the individual variation and the communal variation which the data indicate exists in the Gullah-speaking community.

1.3 Overview

121
128 Chapter 2 will describe the speech community studied in coastal South Carolina, while Chapter 3 will discuss the field methods used in this research. In Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of three linguistic variables now undergoing change in Gullah will be presented. These variables are the pre-infinitival complementizer fE, a static-locative preposition (to), and the third person singular pronouns ee and En. Chapter 5 discusses the social factors influencing change in these grammatical categories and concludes with an evaluation of the competing models for linguistic variation.

128 In the Gullah examples cited in the discussion which follows, the orthography is that which is conventional for written English except for the following symbol:

E = the sound of the vowel in bus
and the sound of the unstressed
vowel in Cuba

121 serving as sources of both shame and group unity for their speakers. One portion of these speech patterns is the subject
121 of the present investigation: that language variety described
• 197 by linguists as a creole, now in the post-creole stage of development, spoken primarily by descendants of the original African immigrants. Labeled Gullah or Sea Island Creole by linguists, and known as Gullah, Geechee, or country-talk by its speakers, this language variety has speakers along the coastal strip between northern Florida and southern North Carolina. Its home base, however, is a smaller area within South Carolina which follows the boundaries of the earliest plantation system between what is now Georgetown County (the county just north of Charleston) and Jasper County on the Georgia border. Both Georgia and North Carolina lie outside the home base of the creole originally, since Georgia was a nonslave settlement until 1750 (Wood, 1974:260), and what is now North Carolina was sparsely settled during the early years of colonization. During the period in which the area's distinctive cultural patterns were being set, a relatively small area of South Carolina formed the central location of the African immigrant population.

The choice of Gullah as the language variety spoken by the majority of the African group and its descendants was not a foregone conclusion. It was a choice related to the subservient position of the slaves from West Africa in the colonial society. As Reinecke (1969) observes, three general

121 types of immigration may be distinguished from the linguistic
• 197 point of view. The first type, settlement in enclaves which preserve ethnic individuality and language even though cut off from their parent groups, was characteristic of parts of central Europe prior to the nineteenth century. The second type, assimilation into the established society with total or almost total loss of ethnic identity and language, has been typical of highly industrialized and newly established countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, South Africa, and certain countries in South America. Assimilation is easier if the immigrants are of the same skin color as the established group and share important cultural traditions. In colonial coastal South Carolina, European settlers from England, France, Scotland, and Wales followed this pattern of assimilation. The third type of immigrant adaptation has been characteristic of plantation laborers who are of a different race, culture, and language from their colonial masters. Brought into the colony as either slaves or contract laborers, these immigrants have not been able to maintain their own languages or to assimilate fully into the established group. For laborers whose contact with the homeland has been effectively cut off, who are thrown into daily contact with fellow laborers speaking different languages and of different cultural traditions, and who are permitted little or no chance of participation in the social life of their masters, development of an interlanguage can be seen a

121 consequence of their situation. The rise of plantation pidgin
• 197 and creole languages can be documented in the Americas where slave labor was used during the early colonial period, and later in other colonies and in Hawaii where contract plantation labor was used. The West African immigrants to colonial South Carolina followed this third pattern of linguistic adaptation.

Brought to work the rice plantation in the marshlands
175 of coastal South Carolina, the West Africans provided the
567 labor which made for the initial economic success of the Carolina colony. A strong case has been made that they also provided the knowledge of rice cultivation and processing which allowed the early European land-owners to effectively adapt to a sub-tropical environment so unlike their native Europe (Wood, 1974). At any rate, the establishment of rice as the base of the colony's economy coincided with the heaviest period of slave importation. Around 1730 two new ports were opened to share the growing export trade with the initial port at Charleston. One of these ports was Port Royal, some sixty miles south of Charleston. The other was Georgetown, sixty miles to the north of Charleston. The early rice
121 plantation area in Georgetown County along a strip of land between the rivers and the Atlantic Ocean is the focus of the present linguistic study.

464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
571 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks, but have been more limited in their occupational choices than
184 the elite group. The social and economic differences between
197 members of the closed community on the river island and the two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more important influence on choosing to use that variety than simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in their speech than do island residents, despite the latter group's greater geographic isolation.

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CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL FACTORS

5.0 Overview

121 •197 The present chapter deals with the social factors of sex, age, and mobility which appear to influence the activation of linguistic change for individual speakers. The variables of sex and age were chosen prior to the field work done for the study, on the basis that these social factors have been shown repeatedly to influence language usage. Mobility, i.e., living or working inside or outside the community, was chosen as a third variable after some time in the field. Observation of children's language use in the (123) classroom and on the playground and conversations about their travels and visits with relatives indicated that the range of language at their command was closely related to the extent of their geographic mobility. Interviews with adult (124) speakers subsequently elicited information about their geographic mobility, after it became apparent that its effect on language use could be even greater than that of economic 128 status for the population being studied. Section 5.1 will discuss the relationship between sex of speaker and language use; 5.2 will consider the factor of age; and 5.3 will discuss

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562 region hold jobs outside the home (see U. S. Census Bureau
463 figures, 1973), the major jobs held by them have been teacher or nurse on the professional level and domestic servant or farm laborer at the non-skilled level. Up until the past decade or two, segregation practices kept black women out of most factory jobs and clerical positions. Figures from the
• [197] 1970 census show that now two of the top five jobs held by black women in rural South Carolina are at the professional level and require use of a standard variety of English daily.
[465] Because salary levels for black women are so low (less than half the median salary for black men in the region), and because almost all of them work at some point in their lives, the incentive to prepare for the higher-paying professional jobs available to them is great. Some anecdotal evidence
562 indicates the strength of this incentive for island young
873 people. In one older family, the women had attended college
463 for four generations; men were skilled construction workers
464 with no college education. One man in this family had financed the college educations of two sisters, working as a skilled craftsman himself. When questioned about why no young men from the island attended college, one young man replied that it made no sense unless he were to study for something "big," like a doctor; laying brick he could make more money than a woman teaching school could make. Occu-
464 pational choices for black men who remain in rural South
562 Carolina are limited chiefly to jobs which require little or
197
463

464 562 197 463

no use of standard English and which entail little interaction with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by black men in the region are blue collar and require few language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island women, however, have had strikingly different employment patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in the group studied have been confined to domestic service or field labor with a limited number of employers. One of these women had lived on a single plantation all of her eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She had had no formal education and could neither read nor write. [212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort motels to work for middle-class families in mainland communities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the [199] middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist population which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers. One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

464 562 197 463 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—a unique job combination which she handled with skill and grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 186 562 [121] A second factor which may influence both choice of language variety and choice of occupation is that of identification with island life. A more detailed attitudinal study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

829 there so that he could teach them the things he had learned,
186 and expressed his belief that older siblings who had moved
562 away would return in later years. A daughter in her late teens praised the island as a place to grow up, but said she would not ask her future husband to live there. Another brother spent long hours in the company of an aged step-grandfather, listening to his stories about the old days on the island. One young mother in another family spoke with feeling of her loneliness during the days she spent on the island with three pre-school children, when most other adults were away at jobs on the mainland. In general, the men on the island seemed to share in more communal activities than did the women. To the outside observer, island life seemed more difficult for women than for men. There was some indication that identification with island life increased with age, for both sexes. One older woman had lived for much of her married life near the metropolitan center of Charleston, returning to the island in later life. Another older man and his wife had spent some years living and working in New York City, returning to the island when his aged parents needed them. They were both leaders in community and church life on the island; their speech reflected their wide range of experience. In formal church speech events, both spoke and read language very close to standard; in their conversations with each other at home many creole features were used. At the close of the field work for the

• [197]

ages 25 and 35 migrated out of the region (Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972). Many of these young people send their children back to the area to be reared by older relatives in a safer environment than the cities can provide, and many return themselves in later life. But the fact remains that the region is losing its young black men and women in great numbers. These migration patterns are no doubt an important contributing factor to the rapid language changes now underway for much of the black population in the region.

5.4 Relationship Between Social Factors and Linguistic Variation

By noting which individual speakers are most advanced in the language change discussed in Chapter 4, it is possible to show an association between social factors discussed in this chapter and the pattern of variation described in the previous chapter. The progression of change for the three linguistic variables was found to be: first, the complementizer; next, the pronouns; and last, the preposition. The language use of the sixteen speakers described in the present chapter is reflected in Table 5 of Chapter 4. (See page 108.) Along the implicational scale shown there, only a younger and a middle aged island woman (Speakers 14 and 9) are shown to use exclusively standard *at* in the prepositional category, the one most resistant to change. For the third person pronouns, all four young and middle aged

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121 cohesiveness than in Sea Island society.

The following quote by Crum rather clearly notes the Gullah people as a unique research population:

> In a very real sense the history of these people furnishes a key to the whole race situation in America. In their isolation the Gullahs provide materials for an interesting social study. It is significant that nowhere on the continent can a purer African culture be found. Until recent years the whole area has been cut off from the rest of the world. The cultural and geographical isolation of these (blacks) offers an absolutely unique situation to the student interested in human relations.[8]

PRIOR GULLAH RESEARCH

121 •199 The Gullah dialect and studies of folk beliefs are the features of Sea Island communities which have been most frequently researched. The earlier studies aimed at isolating the origin of Gullah identified the dialect as a corrupted form of old English learned from lowly European immigrants.[9] On the other hand, Crum[10] proposes that the extraordinary politeness and gentle manners which have [526] [199]

[8] Mason Crum, Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1950), p. 3.

[9] Ambrose Gonzales, Black Borders, Columbia, S. C., 1922; Krapp, The English of the Negro, American Mercury, June, 1924; H. L. Mencken, The American Language, N. Y., 1936 ed.; Reed Smith, Gullah, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina #190, 1926.

[10] Crum, op. cit., p. 4.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of
197 early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The
576 conflicting feature of these two notions is evident.
177 Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks.

121 That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable
197 as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent
174 with the research which places West Africa as the origin of the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
(Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the rela-
174 tively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands
178 and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to restrict variational data, the field work was conducted primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland. Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices
[226] on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and economic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
197 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-
177

ment for a creole language to survive.

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder member is usually the established household spokesman, and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

1.0. Focus of this study

The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

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•197 rigid social stratification brought on by educational programs and other acculturative forces to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of creole speakers to modify their speech in the direction of the standard.

The dynamics involved in this modification process have received little attention from either scholars in creole studies or variation theorists. DeCamp begins this investigation by proposing four alternative stages in the life cycle of a creole language: (1) continuation without change, (2) evolution into a 'normal' language, (3) merger with the superstrate, and (4) extinction. Nichols modifies two of these stages, suggesting instead of 'continuing without change', 'continuing without significant change' because all languages used by living speakers change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language' she recommends 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' because creoles ARE already normal languages, though given the relevant social circumstances they may become extinct at any point (Nichols 1976:4)

Extinction is an obscure term for languages. It can mean that the creole has no living speakers or that it is no longer considered a separate language. Of the four alternatives, DeCamp (1971:17) says that 'Gullah, once widely spoken in Georgia, South Carolina, and the nearby Sea Islands, is now nearly extinct on the mainland and becoming rare on the islands...' Yet he offers no evidence

121 to support his claim. Rickford's analysis of the language
• 197 situation on the Sea Islands is less dramatic than DeCamp's, though similarly pessimistic about the vitality of Gullah as a distinct variety:

> What is most widely spoken on the Sea Islands today is best described as a 'decreolized' or mesolectal variety of Gullah. In fact, I would prefer to abandon the term 'Gullah' entirely because its associations with some purely basilectal variety are already too firmly entrenched. (Rickford 1974:94)

Impressionistic statements of this kind are often misleading or incorrect, and DeCamp and Rickford suggest that Gullah has drifted farther along the post-creole continuum than this study shows. The only safe method of determining linguistic change in Gullah is to count features and their variants. A computation will help to determine the degree, if any, to which present day Gullah is evolving from the creole pattern described by Turner in 1949. This dissertation addresses itself to a quantitative investigation of evolutionary patterns of retention and movement in Gullah and to a demonstration of the dynamics involved in this variation and movement process.

The measurement of fluctuation between features necessarily involves counting. Therefore it is important to choose variables suitable for quantitative analysis. In selecting linguistic variables, I chose ones which met the principal criteria that Labov (1964:166) outlines for quantitative sociolinguistic investigations. These criteria are as follows:

1. The variable should be high in frequency.

121 2. The variable should have a certain immunity from conscious suppression.
•197 3. The variable should be an integral unit of a larger structure.
4. The variable should be easily quantified on a linear scale.

121 My aim is to investigate features that the discipline
197 accepts as characteristic of creole language, and then to
193 contrast frequency counts of these features with those of English. The features selected for this investigation are the preverbal markers and the unmarked third person pronominal forms. These are grammatical categories that will likely appear in any consultant's speech without suppression and with a certain regularity of frequency if they are a part of the speaker's natural grammar, and if the speaker speaks long enough. These variables are an integral part of the grammar of Gullah, and they are easily quantifiable. In addition, Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of these categories for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The investigation of these specific categories will help to determine the degree to which Gullah remains distinct or is evolving toward English. Bailey (1966:146) distinguishes the Creole system from the English system through the use of preverbs and third person pronouns in the following manner:

1. The tense system of the Creole is limited to the unmarked verb for general purposes, and a particle specifying 'past'; English has a more elaborate tense system.

2. There is no subject-verb concord in the Creole; the

121 English verb must agree in number with its subject.

•197 3. There is no matching of gender and sex in third person
193 pronouns in the Creole; English makes such distinctions.

1.1. Studies of Gullah

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114 Early twentieth-century studies on Gullah were linguistically prejudiced. The language was treated as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English. Without regard to the linguistic mechanics of West African languages, A. E. Gonzales attributed the linguistic peculiarities of Gullah to such physical features as full lips and thick tongues. John Bennett, Reed Smith, Guy Johnson and others shared views similar to those of George Krapp of Columbia University who asserted that Gullah was either a close relative of certain British dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries acquired by the African servants from English-speaking supervisors, or that it was only an outgrowth of 'baby talk' that the Europeans used while addressing their servants. In either case, Krapp contended that Gullah was nothing more than an 'intrinsically inferior and simplified form of English with cases, number, gender, and tenses reduced to the vanishing point.' He asserted that 'very little of the dialect or perhaps none of it was derived from sources other than English' (Krapp 1924:192-3).

121 •197 In 1949, Turner settled the controversy of African influence with the publication of *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*. To date, his work remains the most authoritative source on Gullah. His aim was not to prove that this language had no remnants of British English, but to prove that African elements also existed in and interfered with the linguistic system to such an extent that the language was creolized.[1]

1.2. Problems in Creole Studies

Creolists no longer attempt to argue for ONLY European or ONLY African ancestry for Gullah and other Atlantic creoles. They now concern themselves with the genetic classification of the elements of these languages. But they do not agree on any typological criterion which defines the various mixtures resulting from the merger of genetically unrelated languages. Schuchardt, an early scholar in the area of creole studies, referred to a language resulting from such unions as a 'Mischsprache', a language composed of elements derived from both parent languages but possessing the genetic classification of neither.

121 The Atlantic creoles could be classified as branches of Indo-European language families, or branches of Niger-Congo language families. The French creoles, for example, could be added as a branch of the North Gallo-Romance

121 inflected languages tend to lose their inflections in time before developing new ones, and that languages which borrow in great quantity from the lexicon of another often erode the borrowed inflection without becoming a creole (Givón 1973:21). An example of this erosion process is seen in the change from old to modern English, though what caused the inflections to vanish is unclear. It may be argued that inflections are useful for helping to minimize errors in comprehension. Yet Chinese gets along well without them. Inflections seemingly complicate the grammar and make languages more difficult to learn. Yet all children learn language at about the same rate regardless of structure. Consequently, language effectiveness cannot be measured by morphology alone.

A second feature attributed to creole languages is borrowed vocabulary. It is in this area that all languages tend to borrow most extensively. While they do borrow lexicon, Givón (1973:26-7) enumerates some reasons why languages seldom borrow grammar:

> 1. The most idiosyncratic and unsystematic feature of human languages is the pairing of actual sound sequences to actual meanings in the lexicon. This is, happily, the most arbitrary thing about language and thus also the area where languages diverge the most.
> 2. It is only natural that when different linguistic groups come in contact, the area of most acute linguistic conflict is the lexicon. Thus given no universality in this area of total arbitrariness, this is also the area where languages are likely to borrow most from each other—in order to resolve the conflict.

• [197] Some dialectologists classify Gullah as a dialect of English rather than as a creole language because its lexicon

121 •197 is predominantly English. As exemplified in the previous discussion, lexicon alone does not constitute a dialect of a language. A dialect of English is a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. In the United States dialectal variations present virtually no comprehension barrier to other speakers of American English outside of a particular region. Gullah does lack the structural intercomprehensibility afforded by dialects of American English, and consequently it can not be properly defined within the boundaries of the English language in the same manner as many English dialects.

121 Creole languages are no longer regarded as 'bastard' dialects disowned and held in low repute by linguists. Rather, they are now studied as independent language systems with inherent peculiarities resulting from their own course of development. Creoles studied in this manner allow linguists not only to examine subtleties in phonological, syntactical and morphological elements as they contrast with their superstrate and substrate sources, but also to make judgments about creole systems as they compare and relate to each other.

12 The massive studies undertaken recently on languages throughout the world have revealed striking similarities among pidgin and creole languages which could not have had any prior genetic affiliation. For example, both Atlantic and Pacific creoles have a number of reduplicated

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AS 193 [177] tense marker adds more support to the hypothesis that the sporadic occurrence of *-ed* in Black dialect is a stage in language acquisition. The occurrence of the lone mesolectal speaker who said /ɔ: god oβə dɛ:/ 'I went over there' is not dissimilar from the constructions occurring in the speech of some Black dialect speakers who say *I knowed that already*. Furthermore, many of the same social and geographical factors which nurtured the growth and development of Gullah on the islands also nurtured Black dialect on the mainland. But historically the islands were closed communities with little in migration. The speech patterns were therefore much more stable than those of other inland Black people who had more interaction with English-speaking Europeans. Today, linguists continue

AS 193 • 197 177 to classify the people who speak Gullah as different from those who speak Black dialect. While it is possible to separate Gullah from Black dialect linguistically, it is no longer as easily done socially. With improved transportation to and from the islands, many Gullah speakers interact daily with inland Black speakers through economic and social activities. It is through this interaction that some language changes are occurring in Gullah. It is very likely that certain features associated with Gullah are being reinforced in inland Black dialect speakers through this same process.

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193 da > *a* being retained for continuative aspect, and doz introduced to signal habitual aspect alone. (Rickford 1974: 102)

According to Rickford, invariant *be* is introduced in Gullah and becomes obligatory before VERB + *ing* to express habitual and continuative aspect at once (e.g. *He does be working*). Later, /dɔz/ is deleted and *be* is left to mark habitual aspect as it does in Black dialect. The data for my study seem to support a more mesolectal existence for the /dɔz/ form. The proportionate usage of /dɔz/ in the pre-mesolect is more than three times that of its occurrence in the basilect. When the form appears in the sampling, it appears in constructions very similar to those in Rickford's study, e.g. /ɔi dɔz bi taid/ 'I am tired (habitually)'.

2.9. Conclusions

[197] The analysis of preverbs is based on the assumption that there are levels of Creole spoken on the island ranging from present-day basilect to pre-acrolectal Gullah. The conclusions emerging from an analysis of English verb markers and Creole preverb markers are:

(1) The data on suffixal *-s* clearly show that none of the consultants in this corpus have acquired conventional English rules for concord. The *-s* suffix is absent, and

193 i it am 'He hit it' (2)

Variant forms and their frequency of occurrence offer a clue to the stages of pronominal acquisition in Gullah. Following the model that Bickerton outlined for Guyanese (128) Creole, I divided each stage of development into three groups consisting of forms representing, in each case,

1) masculine, feminine, and neuter subject /

2) masculine and feminine possessive /

3) masculine, feminine, neuter objects,

respectively. The data for third person singular pronouns suggest on the whole that the language is decreolizing but not as rapidly as some have predicted. There is a 193 progression from the system first noted by Turner (1949: •197 227):

im im im / im im / on on on

While each speaker displays variation in the choice of pronouns, a compilation of the MOST dominant forms reveals that the consultants in this study maintain a genderless pronominal system:

i i i / i i / on on on

A similar study of linguistic change in Gullah was undertaken recently quite independent of my own. The study reveals identical findings:

> On the basis of both distribution across categories and frequency of occurrence, the two basic creole forms for Gullah third person pronouns of singular number are here identified as ee for both nominative and possessive cases and en for objective case. (Nichols 1976:101)

3.4. Stages in Language Acquisition

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•197 A diachronic look at Gullah indicates that Turner (1949:227) cites the appearance of the creole pronoun /i/ in nominative position co-occurring with /ɪm/. The co-occurrence of these forms suggests that a rule conflict was in progress and /i/ would eventually replace /ɪm/ as the general marker of gender in nominative position. The pronoun /i/ is said to make the replacement because historically there are fewer occurrences of /ɪm/ as nominative marker in the basilect than there are occurrences of /i/, and because /ɪm/ has been recorded to mark or co-occur with /i/ in nominative position for all genders in Jamaican Creole (*im*)(Bailey 1966), and Guyanese Creole (*am*)(Bickerton 1975). The evidence indicates that unlike Bickerton's model for Guyanese Creole, the diachronic model for Gullah is more conservative in Stage I:

Stage I. i i i / i i / am am am
(Model for Guayanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

Stage I for Gullah:

ɪm ɪm ɪn / ɪm ɪm / ɔm ɔm ɔm

The difference in the stage I pattern for Gullah and Guyanese Creole may be accounted for by different origins, different developmental stages, or different source languages. Both models are reminiscent of certain West African languages such as Yoruba, for example, which uses one form /ọ; ọ̀/ for 'he', 'she', and 'it' in subject

193 position (Turner 1949:228). It is characteristic of
•197 Atlantic creole languages to display a reduced distinction of third person singular pronouns.

Contact between language systems caused a change in the Stage I pattern, and Turner's data indicates that discrimination of gender occurred first in the neuter subject before taking place in the human subjects.

Stage II: ɪn ɪn i / ɪm ɪm / ɔn ɔn ɔn

One theory that can be proposed is that neuter /i/ was linearly transferred intra-categorically to the masculine and feminine forms before making other changes in the objective categories. Stage III is essentially the same undifferentiated gender as Stage I:

Stage III: i i i / ɪm ɪm / ɔn ɔn ɔn

I attribute this change to partial selection, where Gullah speakers approximated the contact language's pre-aspirated /(h)i/ and incorporated it intra-categorically into their genderless mold, to make minimal adjustments to accommodate the new form.

i ɜ bene kom bɔk til die klɪn (3)
'She didn't come back until morning.'

Only in Stage IV does Gullah reveal a system identifiable with Bickerton's Stage I:

Stage IV: i i i / i i / ɔn ɔn ɔn (Gullah)

As exemplified by the survey, the consultants involved in this study use the Stage IV system.

[194] /i/ marking feminine subject is being replaced by

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193 some Gullah speakers who now add the palato-alveolar frica-
•197 tive /ʃi/ while /i/ as masculine and neuter marker is
[194] still used.

Stage V: i ʃi i / ɪm ɪm / ɔm ɔm ɔm

000 At this stage in Guyanese Creole, Bickerton says that gender differentiation is interrupted as the change process recognizes the salience of /am/ in the object. He considers it salient because it is the only basilectal form in the system which is not perceived to be present in the acrolect. His claim seems inconsistent with the data for creoles. He argues that the principle of least effort ASSURES that replacement of a form will PRECEDE rather than ACCOMPANY a form differentiating gender; and that a form already in the system will constitute the replacement. He concludes that gender differentiation takes place next in the neuter subject:

Stage IV: i shi it / i i / i shi i
(Model for Guyanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

This claim seems inconsistent with the data for some creole
193 languages. It does not parallel the developmental process for pronouns in Gullah because *it* as object pronoun seldom, if ever, occurs in the speech of the consultants in this study.

19 Stage VI: i ʃi i / ɪm ɪm / ɔm ʃi ɔm

Gender is distinguished in the object by the transference of the existing form /ʃi/ from the nominative to the object slot. Then, /ɔm/ is replaced by /ʃi/, A FORM

000 easy relexification.

193
•197 In the last stages of decreolization, if one can assume that total decreolization will occur, a point on the continuum is reached where non-standard use of pronouns is more perceivable, and final replacement occurs:

Stage IX: i ʃi ɪt / ɪm ʃi / ɪm ʃi ɪt

Stage X: i ʃi ɪt / ɪm ʃi / ɪm hɔɪ ɪt

Stage IX is a pre-acrolectal or very advanced stage for Gullah. Few speakers of Gullah use standard English *her*. The final stage involving replacement of possessive items is omitted by Bickerton. I include this stage for Gullah because of its widespread occurrence. The masculine and feminine possessive are often marked in Gullah by the definite article *the* + *own* which may account for the infrequent use of pronouns to mark the possessive.

i kat de uon hied	'He cut his own head'	(2)
ʃi kɔk de uon fud	'She cooks her own food.'	(4)

This change is difficult to account for in the evolution of pronouns in Gullah. One would not expect it to occur as a pre-acrolectal stage because *the* is not present in the superstrate language indicating possession in any way, even allowing for phonetic alternations. I believe that this change was occurring with other basilectal changes before the introduction of *she* marking possessive when we get forms like:

ʃi du ʃi uon hɛ	'She does her own hair.'	(9)
i kɔn ʃok im uon baʔɪ	'He can suck his bottle.'	(1)

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This theory of possessive placement would then be in accord with Bickerton's concept that the completion of the possessive category is the final stage, with *her* occurring by transference to possessive position and finally *his* being the last form introduced to replace /ɪm/.

Stage XI: hi ʃi ɪt / iz ɔɪ / ɔm ɔr ɪt

Stage XII: hi ʃi ɪt / hɪz hɔɪ / hɪm hɔɪ ɪt

It is difficult to say exactly where the last four stages (IX, X, XI and XII) occur in relation to each other. The data have too few occurrences of *his* or *her* to really be able to point to a change sequence. However, it is apparent that pronominal forms show up very early in Guyanese Creole which are just beginning to appear in Gullah. Yet the Guyanese distribution seems less systematic, which is not to say that speakers are necessarily systematic in acquiring another language; but it appears that in the system that Bickerton proposes, the speakers zig-zag across categories in their acquisition of pronominal forms. The consultants in the pronominal study for Gullah seem to show SOME system. Correlation of the data shows that they acquire a form, and use this one form to saturate each case before selecting another form. Other forms are acquired simultaneously but not distributed until the process is well underway with the first selection. The stages are theoretical but do not necessarily represent an idealized model for linguistic change in Gullah. These stages can be shown on a grid developed from raw data.

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CONSULTANTS	PRONOUNS							
	3 ϕ O	3 ♀ O	3 ♂ O	3 ϕ N	3 ♂ P	3 ♂ N	3 ♀ P	3 ♀ N
2	1	1	(1)2 3	2	2	(1)2 3	2	(2)3
8	(1)2 3	1	(1)2	2	-	(2)3	-	(2)3
5	1	1	(1)2 3	1	(2)3 4	1 2 3	2	-
23	1	(1)2 3	(1)4	2 3	(1)2	(1)2	2 3	(2)4
3	1	(1)3	1	2	-	(2)3	-	(2)3 4
10	1	1	1	-	2	2	-	2
6	1	(1)4	(1)3	2	2	2	-	(2)3
24	1	1	1	2	1(2)3	2	-	(2)3
4	1	1	1	1 2	1 2	1(2)3	-	(2)4
KEY	1=ən	1=ən	1=ən	1=ɪm	1=ɪm	1=ɪm	1=ɪm	1=ɪm
	2=i	2=i	2=i	2=i	2=i	2=i	2=i	2=i
	3=ɪt	3=ʃi	3=ɪm	3=ɪt	3=ɪz	3=hi	3=ʃi	3=hi
		4=hɛz	4=hɪm		4=hɪz		4=hɛz	4=ʃi

TABLE 3.4.
IMPLICATIONAL SCALE FOR THIRD PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUNS IN GULLAH

♂ = Masculine
♀ = Feminine
ϕ = Neuter
N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

Circled numbers indicate the form used most frequently..

193 Bickerton's data and charts differ substantially from mine because his are based on groups of speakers, whereas I limited myself to showing pronoun distribution for nine

193 Unlike the feminine, there are high numbers in the cells for the column marked THIRD PERSON MASCULINE POSSESSIVE. One speaker shows usage of /i/, /ɪz/ and /hɪz/, though most speakers have marked this category with /i/. It is significant that speakers 8 and 3 leave both masculine and feminine possessive case unmarked. It is significant because it adds more credibility to possessive cases being unmarked by pronouns in the basilect.

• [197] The pronominal system shows the least amount of change in the masculine, feminine and neuter objective case. All the consultants continue to use /ɔm/ regardless of gender on sex-reference. It is my belief that the objective slot is the only one still marked for case.

193 197 The greatest degree of change has occurred in the nominative case. Five of the nine consultants have acquired a rule for aspirating /i/ to produce English *he*, but the rule is not stable. Of the 165 times that the masculine subject appears in the data, 78% were marked with /i/ and only 19% were marked with aspiration (/hi/). The fluctuation and variability between /i/ and /hi/ where there has been no variation historically is indicative of linguistic change within a creole configuration. Turner records /hɪm/ 'him' as the only pronominal form appearing with aspiration in Gullah. Five of the consultants in this study are moving toward aspiration of other forms, particularly /hi/. The change, however, is only a phonological manifestation of an underlying Creole grammar

193 194 197

193 rule because /hi/ is a form used to refer to both male
194 and female in Gullah.
•197

The /h/ is not entirely lacking in Gullah. Turner offers a list of personal names and words with initial /h/ derived from source languages such as Vai, Mende, Twi, Fon, Wolof and others (Turner 1949:93-94). The appearance of /h/ at least in some consultants' speech indicates that it was phonemic historically in West African words but it is now deleted initially in the pronunciation of Engl' h words. The appearance or non-appearance
(197) of /h/ in present-day Gullah may result from (1) a convergence and vocabulary borrowing from English, (2) a slow spread of /h/ from West African source languages to English words, or (3) the loss of initial /h/ with the subsequent loss of West African words and its reacquisition with English replacements.

193 There is no apparent change at all in neuter subject.
197 The pronoun *it* is yet to be acquired in the pronominal system of these consultants. However, change is activated in the third person feminine subjective case. Three of
(197) the speakers are acquiring the English palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] to mark feminine gender, /ʃi/, while none of the speakers use /ɪm/, a more basilectal form, to mark this position. Though these three speakers use *she*, they use /i/ and /hi/ to mark feminine as well. Eight out of nine marked nominative third person feminine with /i/, while five out of nine marked feminine with /hi/.

'mother'. Dillard (1972) claims that there is a stylistic alternation among Black speakers in the use of [v] and [d], with [v] as the more elegant usage. Though I have not observed the elegant and inelegant alternation, I have noticed that most words with intervocalic voiced *th* are pronounced [d] in the South, while many northern Black dialect speakers pronounce intervocalic voiced *th* as [v]. In his 1949 study, Turner recorded intervocallic voiced *th* as [v] in Gullah. The speech is known to differ on each island, which may account for the /d/ ~ /v/ variation.

/k/ [k] is a voiceless velar stop which is palatalized before high front vowels in Gullah. This process sometimes results in words such as *cake* and *kick* becoming homophones for some speakers. Consultants 2, 3 and 23 often substitute the voiceless affricate /tʃ/ for /k/ before front vowels and words beginning with *c* as in [tʃies] 'case' and [tʃies] 'chase', words which are homophones in Krio and for some Gullah speakers. Speakers 3 and 24 often interchange the /k/ and /tʃ/ sounds in the words [tʃɛkin] 'catching' and [klɔtʃ] 'church'. Like /p/ and /t/, a slightly glottalized /k/ appears in some words, e.g. [kˀɛbɪdʒ] 'cabbage'.

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NOTES

121 1. A PIDGIN is a marginal language which arises to
• 197 fulfill certain restricted communicational needs among
198 people who have no common language. It is sharply reduced in structure and vocabulary as contrasted with the languages from which it is derived (Todd 1974a:1 and Hall 1966). Theoretically, the lingo which developed as a result of the heterogeneous grouping of West African languages and English was a pidgin language: a language which was the mother tongue of neither African nor European, reduced in structure and vocabulary and adequate only for minimal discourse between speakers. When this language became the mother tongue of children born into this language environment, its lexicon and grammatical machinery expanded until it was ample linguistically for effective cultural transmission, productivity and communication. Consequently, the pidgin became a CREOLE. In the case of Gullah, elements derived from different African languages caused different creole varieties and as a result, Gullah still varies linguistically from island to island.

121 2. No consensus has been reached on what features
193 the terms BASILECT, MESOLECT, and ACROLECT describe. On a gradum ranging from 1 to 10 (with basilect being represented by 1 and acrolect represented by 10), Stewart 1965

538 193

1. *snake*	[sinick]	∅ → V / C ___ C
2. *program*	[pogɛm]	r → ∅ / C ___
	[pogam]	neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi. [197]

22. /nɛ/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /nɔ/ and /dɛ/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /ɪm dɛ lɪ:/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /ɪm nɛ lɪ:/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /uno/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U,NU, (Turner 1949:227).

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24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in European religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's lifestyle, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life, the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

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FOREWORD

Gullah, that quaint linguistic mongrel of the black folk of the Carolina-Georgia coast and sea-islands, an English dialect molded by the lips and genius of African slaves, was lifted into the rank of literary languages by Ambrose E. Gonzales by his masterpiece, "The Black Border." Some of the myths and lore of these Negroes had been set down before, but it was left to Gonzales to shape these tales and philosophy into artistic form and contribute them as a positive endowment to our literature. "The Black Border," with its Gullah Vocabulary, has placed this treasure within the easy enjoyment of all readers of English.

It was my pleasure and privilege to assist in the preparation of this Vocabulary and in the unification of Gullah words, which, up to that time, existed almost entirely as spoken and unordered vocables. It is now possible for any one, with these Gullah Stories and Vocabulary, to write any English word in a true Gullah form.

Dr. Reed Smith has added to these labors the true contribution of the scientist. He has worked out the laws and analogies that unconsciously wrought this quaintly beautiful transformation of English through the mentality and spirit of the slaves in Southern homes. He has placed Gullah upon the plane with our great dialects,—Irish, Scottish, and some of the English idioms.

An examination and reading of Gullah will convince any sincere mind that, in allurement, in sheer beauty of word and phrase, and in a certain winsomeness of its own, it is a permanent enrichment of our language and literature.

STANHOPE SAMS.

Asst. Editor *The State*.

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GULLAH

Historical Background

101 Even to those familiar with the American Negro through the medium of either life or literature, the term Gullah is a little-known word for a less-known people. It is applied to a special group-type of Negroes, limited historically and geographically to the sea-islands and the narrow tidewater strip bordering the coast counties of South Carolina and Georgia and a small section of north-east Florida. The 197 language spoken by these Negroes constitutes a patois unique among the dialects of the United States, and differs from the more familiar upland Negro dialects as written by Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page, as markedly as those dialects differ from the French Creole of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta.

174 101 Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River.[1] A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year 1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly

[1] This was the opinion of Mr. Ambrose E. Gonzales, a high authority on Gullah and author of the Black Border Series of Gullah stories. This was also the view of the Rev. John G. Williams. In the Preface to his *De Old Plantation*, Allendale, 1896, he wrote: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and a part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger'. In Appleton's 'New American Cyclopaedia' the Guinea negroes are described as 'black and having thick lips and flat noses', and the Angola, or 'Gulla' negroes as having 'few of the negro peculiarities of form and feature. They are brown in color'. These differences between negroes in the country have been often noticed and remarked upon frequently, the explanation of which differences is that the 'thick lips' and 'flat noses' point to Ashantee and Dahomey as the places from which their ancestors were brought and the 'brown color' and features more like the European in some negroes, very different from the Guineas, point to Angola or 'Gulla' as the country from which their ancestors came. So deeply fixed are the race and even tribal characteristics. There is history in the word 'Gullah', as it is improperly spelt."

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or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia. "The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes," says a leading authority[1] on the subject, "was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the 'quaquas, because they gabbled like geese'."

Whether originally from Angola or from Liberia, these Gullah tribesmen after their enforced immigration to our shores formed a distinct and peculiar group. Their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia coast.

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[1] Mr. John Bennett of Charleston, author of *Master Skylark*, *Madame Margot*, etc., who has been studying the Gullah language and history for a score of years. His article "Gullah: A Negro Patois" (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Part I, Oct., 1908; Part II, Jan., 1909) is a most scholarly and penetrating treatment. The present paper draws deeply from it, as also from the work of Mr. Gonzales. Mr. Bennett feels strongly that the Angola derivation for Gullah is quite without foundation; and reiterates his belief in a personal letter to the writer: "God alone knows all the sources of Gullah, (as a language) its vocables, its accents, etc.; but its name came from that odd, primitive people, back of Monrovia, whose name has been spelled various ways, but which, as we have it, is Gullah."

A third derivation, almost certainly wrong, may be mentioned in passing. Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, M.D., who was for forty years a missionary in the French Congo, thought the Gullahs might come ultimately from a powerful tribe of Cangui or Comi Negroes called Gwalla.

[2] Many of these Negroes were brought to the West Indies and the Carolinas at an early date. The earliest were tempered by servitude in the islands of Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, San Domingo, etc., before arrival in Carolina. Later the untempered Africans were brought direct from the West Coast to Charleston.

An instance of the marked individuality and persistence of Gullah, even under adverse conditions, is told by John G. Williams in *De Ole Plantation*, (Preface V.): "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District,

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175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] [248] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[1]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[194] [199] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

[1] "If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers." *Ibid.*, 145, 148.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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000 now with ditches choked, banks and dam breached by time and tide, grown up in wild rice and marsh grass; the ideal habitat of deer, duck, bob-white, and wild-turkey—the hunter's paradise.

175 Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart.
567 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occasionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.[1]

175 The Civil War and Freedom made far less difference in their lives than might have been expected. During the strenuous Reconstruction period their dependence and isolation, if anything, increased. The financial and social system of the South was broken up; the white planters and their families were impoverished, and many moved to town or city or even emigrated to the up-country, and the Negroes were left to shift for themselves. There amid the wreckage of great plantations,[2] in the broom-sedge

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[197] [1] "Concerning the effects of such continued and unusual isolation within the dialect itself, Mr. Bennett remarks: "There are all grades of negroes, from the rudest field hands to residents of villages and house-servants, who speak with very different degrees of inaccuracy and illiteracy. There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote from all contact with civilization as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island, and sometimes almost what plantation was the spokesman's place. Singular peculiarities upon one plantation may be—or once were—totally lacking upon the next holding, though but a few miles distant." I, 336, Note.

[567] [2] "How utter was the wreckage and complete the reversal in many cases may be dimly realized from the following contrasted pictures: "Many folks of the old regime were destroyed by the war—not merely soldiers on the battlefield, but civilians white and black, driven or lured from shelter, sustenance, and sanitation. Slaves died by uncounted thousands, and many of their masters were utterly broken. The

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000 Since their day, many writers have depicted various phases of Negro life and character, ranging from the broad comedy of Octavus Roy Cohen to the sombre psychological sketches of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, the penetrating analysis of DuBose Heyward, and the problem note of T. S. Stribling and Clement Wood.

114 •197 To come to the Gullah dialect in particular, owing to the peculiar difficulties of representing its sounds in written speech,[10] its appearances in literature have been gradual and infrequent, and up to the last few years have met with comparatively small popular acclaim. What seem to be its only three ante-bellum echoes are Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837;[11] Jupiter, in Poe's "Gold Bug," 1843;[12] and William Gilmore Simms' three stories "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya, or the Loves of the Driver," appearing in 1845 and 1846.[13]

114 533 Within a few years after the close of the war there appeared several important contributions by Northerners whom the war had brought into first-hand contact with Negro plantation music.[14] The earliest was a carefully edited collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York, 1867. These songs were gathered mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, and were accompanied with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the

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[10] This difficulty exists not only for the writers but for the readers as well. It will probably always keep Gullah from becoming as popular as the easier, upland dialects of Harris and Page.

[11] In her Preface Mrs. Gilman says: "Some apology may be necessary, as a matter of taste, for the frequent introduction of the Negro dialect, but the careful reader will perceive that it has only been done when essential to the development of individual character."

[12] The peculiar genius that could create "Ulalume" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" was not fitted to depict a Negro successfully. Jupiter's characterization, however, is better done than his dialect, which is not so bad for Gullah as it would be if it were an attempt at the upland dialect.

[13] Published in the collection entitled *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, in two parts, New York. As to the authenticity of these stories, Simms says in the Prefatory Advertisement: "I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of man."

[14] See also Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, p. 138.

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

114 538 [197]

One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

114 538

Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[11]Boston, 1879, Chapter IX.

[12]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, 'Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[13]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approximated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

How directly and immediately these Georgia and South Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[1]

During the decades following the work of Harris, Page, Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[1] Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

[2] See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I oftimg yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a'whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small lettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my tarek for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C.* This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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*"*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mauma; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. Jervey in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1873, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the nonce as Negroes: the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun, I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, Review of *The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: ''E look same like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe: it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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THE DIALECT

•197 What the Gullahs seem to have done was to take a sizeable part of the English vocabulary as spoken on the coast by the white inhabitants from about 1700 on, wrap their tongues around it, and reproduce it changed in tonality, pronunciation, cadence, and grammar to suit their native phonetic tendencies, and their existing needs of expression and communication. The result has been called by one writer "the worst English in the world". It would certainly seem to have a fair claim to that distinction. To understand it requires a trained ear, and at first blush it is equally unintelligible to white people and colored people alike.

[194] [193] "The ordinary reader," says Mr. Bennett, "may not always catch the meaning; the shapes of the words are strange; they are the residuum of language literally worn away by use; the phonology is archaic; the engaged grammar a mystery; to the wit and to the acute phonetic sense of the reader much must inevitably be left."[1]

It is easy to understand the bewilderment of a northern visitor to the South just after the war who fell in with a crowd of Negro refugees on the wharves in Charleston. "I tried to converse with others," he writes, "who spoke a wild jargon peculiar to the plantations, of which I understood hardly one word in ten."[2] White housekeepers in Georgetown, Charleston, and Beaufort have been heard at the present day to lament the fact that they could not understand their own cooks, which is but one way of confessing that they are not native, but have moved in from the up-country.

One of the funniest things I ever saw was a fashionable colored nurse-maid from the up-country listening for the first time to a Gullah cook and a Gullah fisherman on Pawley's Island arguing over the price of a string of fish. As the flood of Gullah vocables burst around her ears the up-country negro's expression was a study in mingled amazement and incredulity: she couldn't believe her own ears!

[1] I, 377.

[118] [2] J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866, p. 538.

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695 A case in point will be enlightening. Here is a verbatim account" of the testimony in a suit brought in connection with a collision between two sail-boats in a heavy fog. The defendant asserted that no warning of any kind had been given.

695 539 •197 "That is not so," the plaintiff declared. "My lookout gave warning in ample time; he hailed you long before you struck, and ran us down; you had ample warning."

The lookout was summoned, a black man, sphinx-like, silent.

"You called out to the defendant the moment you saw him through the fog?"

"Me yerre um; no shum; *too* long buffo' me shum, me yerre um.""

"And the moment you heard them you sang out, is that not so?"

A grave nod assented.

The plaintiff rested his case; the cross-examination began:

"You hailed the sloop before you could see her; could they hear you hail?"

A succinct nod.

"How do you know?"

"Me yerre dem; dem blan fuh yerre we; yez yerre yondeh senkah yerre yuh."[2]

"You hailed them then?"

"Me duh holleh."

"That is what I mean: you hailed the on-coming vessel?"

"Me yent no sicarum; me holleh one patty-augah."[3]

"Very well. And what did you say?"

"Me say, 'Oonah konnou oonah?' "

Which is equivalent, in Gullah, to *"Whose boat is that?"* The records will show the outcome of the case; the writer has not the verdict recorded.

197 Again, in briefer scope, a deer hunter asked an old darkey if a certain stand was a good one for deer. "Me yent kin say, mossa," replied the old man, "W'en oona duh de-dey, de dee' duh no de-day; w'en oona yent dey, de dee' duh de-dey." That is, "When one is there, the deer is not there; when one is not there, the deer is there."

191 It is only fair to say that the low-country darkeys are

[2] Bennett I, 340, 341.

[3] "I heard him (them); I didn't see him (them); too long before I saw him (them); I heard him (them)."

"I heard them; they (were) obliged to hear me; ears hear yonder same as hear here."

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[a]

To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of its most interesting features,[b] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

Both on this account and also because it has had to muddle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to language have had free sway." Furthermore, when it was first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[a] Bennett I, 340.

[b] In this connection two important preliminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah: some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVII) gives several Bahaman parallels such as *day-clean*, *man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplicatory exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *tan* (very), *sinter* (South Carolina *cuty*), *peje* (eye), *tilla*, (sister), and *oonuh* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in the sense that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gullah has its variants, as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant plantations and absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Santee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[c] "Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

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192 538 In connection with *nutten-aigs* Mr. Bennett vouches for an anecdote which is almost too good to be true: In a certain house in Charleston, dessert came on the table, looking and tasting peculiar. "Judy," said the mistress, "What is the matter with this pudding? Did you put three eggs in it?"

"Yas, missus, me yiz. Yo' tell me fuh tek t'ree aig; dey yunt bin no hen-aig, so me yiz tek de nutt'n-aigs."

Words

192 There are curiously few survivals of native African words in Gullah, a fact that has struck most students of the language.[1] The commonest are the exclamation *ki* (or *kai*) to express wonder or to add emphasis to a statement, and *buckra* for white man, both, however, being widely found elsewhere. To these may be added *nyam*, *oona*, *swanga* (or *swongger*), *du-du*, *goober*, *pinder*, *cooter*, *okra*, *greehy*, *cymbi*, *bakalingo* (obsolescent), *guffer*, *penepne*, *da*, *da-da*. *Malafee* for whiskey has been noted on St. Helena Island.[2] Mrs. Christensen records several African phrases or formulas in her stories.[3] Two words that have not been traced to any known source, and which may be African in origin, are *Stepney* and *Plat-eye*. *Stepney* is

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[1] Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Intro., XXI. Bennett, I, 338.

George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, June, 1924, p. 193.

In Professor Krapp's opinion the English of the Negro has not retained a trace of native African speech, and has added only a few words to the language, such as *voodoo*, *hoodoo*, and *buckra*. "Generalizations are always dangerous," he continues, "but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."

[197] Of Gullah in particular he says: "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English, with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English, and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English. In vocabulary, in syntax, and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious."

[2] Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Intro., XXI.

[539] [3] "Sarsey Bey cum blunda!
Tung cum blunda!
(From the story of the "Cooter an' Deer".)

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As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted in conclusion Mr. Gonzales' record of a colored husband's description of the way the woman manages the man. It is a fable in lighter vein. The devil acts as interlocutor.

"One time, Debble meet 'Ooman duh paat'. Debble is uh berry mannussuble man wid 'Ooman, so, w'en 'e shum 'e t'row 'e tail obuh 'e naa'm, same lukkuh 'e bin cloak, en' mek'um uh berry stylish bow. De 'Ooman toss 'e head, 'e grin, 'e ketch 'e frock by de bottom wid alltwo 'e han', 'e hice'um up to 'e knee, en' 'e drap'um uh low cutchy, 'cause him en' Debble git 'long berry well, *berry* well!

"Attuh de time uh day done pass, de Debble ax de 'Ooman how 'e mek'out 'long de man; w'edduh 'e done l'aa'n how fuh manage de man, en' fetch'um to 'e han'. De 'Ooman laugh. 'Budduh,' 'e say. 'Hukkuh you kin ax me dat? Enty you l'aa'n me how fuh 'seitful? Enty you show me how fuh do 'um? Enty Uh folluh yo' ezwice? Uh got de man gwine! 'E dunno w'ich way 'e duh gwine—but 'e gwine my way, enty?"

"'Tell me how you do'um,' de Debble say.

"'Uh got good ecknowledge how fuh fool de man. Uh got 'tring tie 'pun de man, en' w'en we git to de fawk uh de road, weh one de road lean one side, en' t'odduh road lean t'odduh side—w'en Uh git to da' place, ef Uh gwine one road, Uh pull de 'tring fuh lead de man een de t'odduh road. W'ichebbuh road Uh want, Uh pull de man een de road wuh Uh *yent* want, 'cause de stubbunt creetuh so cuntrady en' haa'dhead, ef him see me foot lean fuh one road, him foot fuh lean to de t'odduh one, 'cause him t'ink man fuh hab 'e own way. Him eegnunt to dat! So dat how Uh gitt-um fuh trabble my road, en' de man nebbuh know weh 'e duh gwine, but 'e ben' 'e neck en' pull de load, jiz' ez sattify ez ox wuh done bruk!'"[11]

[11] *The Captain*, pp. 380, 381.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. According to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts of Africa.

Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a conjurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

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GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard.

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Negroes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folk-lore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography.

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1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

Mr. John Bennett, who made the first serious study of the history and characteristics of Gullah, held this view. He says:[4]

> The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabbled like geese."

Which of these theories is the more plausible is difficult to say. The derivation of the word Gullah is one thing and its usage another. Regardless of its true derivation, it came to be applied, not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to the Negroes of the sea-island and coastal region in general. Any ethnological significance that the word may have had at first was soon lost, and it seems likely that the entry of the Charleston City Council of 1822 represented the prevailing idea as to the derivation of the word. If the Golas were really important, would not the difference between them and the Angolas have become common knowledge after more than a hundred years

[4] "Gullah: A Negro Patois." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the Gullah speech is harsh or quacking. It did not strike me that way at all.

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of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[8]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[8] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

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Another important factor in the development of Gullah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his language to a lower level when communicating with someone who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than the English dialect which the white servants and laborers around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.[6] Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

The Civil War and emancipation made very little difference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they were now more isolated than before, because many of the white planters, made penniless by the war, left their plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

[6] The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

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of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have not seen a white man for several years. 177

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished in isolation and has survived with little change because of the continued isolation of its native area. 131 [505] [484] 197 178

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves. 197

The same isolation which explains the persistence of Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks 000

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of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[7] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

[7] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

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allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.